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## Allen Wins Initial Fight to Maintain FIA Offices in Every County *FIA budget amended to assure access for every Michigan resident*

LANSING, MI – Senator Jason Allen, R- Traverse City, today announced the protection of families from Sault Ste. Marie and Ironwood to Temperance and Niles, by successfully having the Family Independence Agency (FIA) budget amended to require that an FIA office be maintained in every county.

“Providing adequate access to the FIA offices is essential to serving the residents of Michigan,” Allen said. “I am working hard to ensure that the needs of northern Michigan residents are not forgotten during the long and challenging budget debates.”

Allen worked with members of the Family Independence Agency Appropriations Subcommittee to include language in the FIA budget, Senate Bill 283, to ensure the needs of all Michigan residents are considered by the state. The possibility of restricted services and consolidated offices has again come to the forefront in light of the state’s \$1.7 billion budget deficit. The language would ensure continued services in counties such as Presque Isle or Leelanau Counties, where office consolidations have been discussed. Senator Allen successfully included language in last year’s budget to keep the Presque Isle office open.

The Senate passage of a state budget bill is the first step in an extensive and demanding appropriation process. Governor Jennifer Granholm sent her budget priorities to the Legislature, and now the Legislature is in the process of establishing its priorities.

“Requiring families to travel over an hour to have access to FIA services is unacceptable,” Allen said. “Long drives may translate into fewer residents getting the help they need. This is not acceptable for people living in Presque Isle, Chippewa, or any other county in the state. That is why we must maintain an FIA office in every county, providing every resident with the opportunities they need to seek assistance.”

Senate Bill 283 passed the Senate unanimously on Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, and will now be considered by the House of Representatives.